



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Public Protection Cabinet

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ILLEGAL ALCOHOL OPERATION HALTED BY ABC INVESTIGATOR

State investigator credited with successful undercover investigation

Frankfort, KY (Dec. 5, 2016) – An investigator for the Kentucky Department of Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) has thwarted a local man's attempts to sell stolen alcohol.

In late 2015, ABC Investigator Willie Skeens was notified by Georgetown police that Brian Middleton, a local third-party contractor, was attempting to sell stolen liquor, ranging from bourbon to specialty tequila, out of the trunk of his car.

Investigator Skeens contacted Middleton to set up an initial meeting, during which time he purchased 16 fifths of Makers Mark and one bottle of 12-year Yamazaki single malt whiskey. ABC investigators were able to purchase alcohol from Middleton on two other occasions, each time meeting him in the parking lot of local Frankfort businesses and recording undercover video of the transactions. In total, Middleton sold over \$2,000, approximately 121 bottles, of assorted liquor to ABC undercover investigators. He pled guilty last month in Franklin Circuit Court.

"Our team of dedicated investigators was instrumental in stopping this illegal operation," said ABC Commissioner Christine Trout. "This is another example of the collaboration between our licensees and the ABC enforcement division to ensure state alcohol laws are enforced to protect the integrity of Kentucky's alcoholic beverage industry."

"We appreciate the diligence of the Kentucky ABC and its investigators, and we were pleased to cooperate with them," said Nathan Crosley, Senior Director, America's Supply Chain. "We take the security of our products and the integrity of our supply chain very seriously and are very happy that this matter was resolved."

Approximately 95 percent of the world's bourbon is made in Kentucky and ABC regularly partners with state licensees to recover stolen product and mitigate loss from theft. The Enforcement Division at ABC executes Kentucky's alcohol laws and provides educational awareness in order to increase the rate of compliance.

For more information about ABC, please visit <http://abc.ky.gov/>

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